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General Assembly
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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 11 September 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Yesterday, 10 September 2015, the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favour of the resolution on raising the flags of non-member observer States at the United Nations, namely, the flags of the State of Palestine and the Holy See. It is without a doubt that yesterday's historic vote reaffirms the legitimacy of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people, their existence among the nations of the world and their right to self-determination in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We realize that raising our flag will end neither the occupation nor the cruel subjugation of the Palestinian people, but it will help restore some hope to the Palestinian people and their leadership as they continue on the peaceful, non-violent, political and legal path to fulfilling their rights. This is ever so important, especially given the deteriorating situation on the ground in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, as a result of Israel's illegal actions and practices.

In this regard, it is with great sadness that we must include in our letter today the tragic news that Riham Dawabsha, 27 years of age, has become the third member of her family who has succumbed to her wounds and died as a result of the heinous terrorist arson attack that engulfed her home in the West Bank town of Duma in flames on 31 July. Riham, the mother of 18-month-old Ali, who was burned alive, and wife of Saad, who died of his wounds on 8 August, sustained third-degree burns on 90 per cent of her body. She fought for her life in a hospital bed for five weeks until her condition took a turn for the worse. Riham is survived by her son, Ahmad, 4 years of age, the only living member of the family, who lies in a hospital bed suffering from massive burns to his small body. Ahmad, like so many Palestinian children, is now an orphan without a mother, father or siblings — a fate that, sadly, many more Palestinian children will suffer if Israeli settler terrorists are not held accountable for their crimes.

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We reiterate our condemnation of this heinous terrorist arson attack and continue to hold the Government of Israel responsible for the deaths of these innocent civilians as well as the culture of hate and violence it continues to foster through the imposition of its endless, illegal policies and practices, which include the transfer of illegal settlers to illegal settlements throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Up until today, no arrests have been made in the terrorist arson attack, even though the Israeli Government has publicly confirmed that the perpetrators have been identified. The lack of accountability granted by the occupying Power to Israeli settlers who carry out terrorist attacks will only further incite the culture of violence and hatred that has already been fomented against Palestinian civilians and their properties, resulting in undeterred settler violence and the continued killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians, including children.

Besides the impunity that Israeli settlers enjoy as a result of the Israeli occupying forces, the Palestinian people also continue to be harmed and killed by Israeli occupying forces. Such excessive and disproportionate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces can clearly be witnessed in Nabi Saleh, a West Bank village in which, every Friday, a non-violent demonstration is coordinated to protest against the stealing of land and water resources by the neighbouring illegal Israeli settlement of "Halamish". During a demonstration held on 28 August 2015, the world witnessed the brute force by Israeli occupying forces against children when a masked Israeli soldier placed an already injured Mohammed Basim Tamimi, 12 years of age, in a headlock with an assault rifle to his cheek. The terrified Mohammed was freed only as a result of the efforts of Palestinian women and girls who were relatives of Mohammed, who struggled with the Israeli soldier to free the young boy. Even though not all instances of it are photographed and recorded on video for the world to see, this sort of abuse and violence against Palestinian children is perpetuated, regularly and systematically, as part of a policy by Israel, the occupying Power. Such is the case in the occupied Gaza Strip, where, just last week, the child of a fisherman was shot and injured by Israeli occupying forces near the shores of Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip. The young child who was shot, Bilal Abu Amro, is only 11 years old. Regrettably, this is not the first incident, as Palestinian fishermen in the Gaza Strip continue to be targeted and attacked by Israeli occupying forces on a regular basis, further infringing on their livelihoods and threatening the economic survival of their families.

As the violations against Palestinian children continue to multiply, we continue to insist again that the Israeli Government, the Israeli occupying forces and Israeli settler militias belong on the list of grave violators of child rights in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, and we will not relent in calling for such listing in the face of ongoing violations and crimes against our innocent and defenceless children.

Moreover, in other parts of Occupied Palestine where peaceful demonstrations take place on a regular basis, Israeli occupying forces display the same type of contempt for Palestinian lives. This is definitely the case in the Palestinian town of Bait Jala, where, every Sunday after mass, Palestinian Christians, led by a revered church leader, Patriarch Michel Sabbah, peacefully protest against Israel's expansionist Wall, which cuts deep into Palestinian land. This past Sunday, 6 September, images of medics helping a nun injured by Israeli tear gas clearly

demonstrated that Israeli occupying forces target Palestinian civilians regardless of whether they are men, women, children, elderly, disabled or Muslim or Christian.

Indisputably, the above-mentioned violations are in grave breach of international humanitarian law, as well as international criminal law as articulated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and in contempt of the will of the international community. We call again upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act immediately to end Israel's impunity and resolve this conflict, which clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Moreover, since Israel, the occupying Power, has so evidently forfeited its responsibility under international humanitarian law to protect the people under its occupation, we continue to call upon the international community to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. The international community cannot continue to remain paralysed in resolving this issue, as that will only contribute to the spreading of more conflict and extremism in our region and undermine faith in the rule of law and the international system and in the prospects for peace.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 551 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 18 August 2015 (A/ES-10/688-S/2015/649), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations